United Nations A/66/PV.113

General Assembly

Sixty-sixth session

Official Records

113th plenary meeting
Friday, 8 June 2012, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 138 (*continued*)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/66/668/Add.13)

The President: Before proceeding to the item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/66/668/Add.13, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/66/668/Add.12, Liberia has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/66/668/Add.13?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 4

Election of the President of the General Assembly

Election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-seventh session

The President: In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I now invite members of the Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-seventh session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138, of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-seventh session should be elected from among the Eastern European States.

In that connection, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States for the month of June 2012 that His Excellency Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations, and His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, are the two candidates for the presidency of the General Assembly for the sixty-seventh session.

In accordance with rule 92 of the rules of procedure, the election shall be held by secret ballot and there shall be no nominations.

Before we begin the voting process, I should like to remind members that, pursuant to rule 88 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order on the actual conduct of the voting.

The ballot papers are now being distributed. I request representatives to use only those ballot papers and to write the name of the candidate for whom they wish to vote, not the name of the candidate's country. Ballot papers containing more than one name or containing only the name of a country will be declared invalid.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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At the invitation of the President, Mr. Louis (Colombia), Mr. Giorgio (Eritrea), Mr. Kumar (India), Mr. Hawezy (Iraq), Ms. Popovici (Republic of Moldova) and Ms. Lindqvist (Sweden) acted as tellers.

A vote was taken by secret ballot.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 10.50 a.m.

The President: The result of the voting is as follows:

Number of ballot papers:	190
Number of invalid ballots:	5
Number of valid ballots:	185
Abstentions:	1
Number of members voting:	184
Required simple majority:	93
Number of votes obtained:	
Mr. Vuk Jeremić (Serbia)	99
Mr. Dalius Čekuolis (Lithuania)	85

Having obtained the required majority, His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić was elected President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

The President: I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Jeremić. After the adjournment of this meeting, there will be an opportunity for Member States to extend their congratulations to Mr. Jeremić, President-elect for the sixty-seventh session, in the Indonesian Lounge.

I would like to thank both candidates in today's election for the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session.

To Mr. Dalius Čekuolis, I express my admiration for his strong candidature. I wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

To Mr. Jeremić, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. Mr. Jeremić brings to this position his extensive experience in multilateralism and international affairs. I have no doubt that he will lead the Member States of this pre-eminent world body in a truly able and dedicated manner. I wish him all the best in taking up this Office. I also wish to emphasize at this point that I will be available, and more than willing, to offer him and his team my full support, especially as he prepares to assume the presidency on 18 September.

For me and my team, there is still much work to be done in the remaining three months of the sixty-sixth session. We are determined to leave behind a stronger General Assembly, one that the people of the world can look up to and depend upon. I am confident that our common efforts will be continued and built upon under Mr. Jeremić's stewardship.

While wishing him every success, I now invite His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, who has just been elected President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, to take the floor.

Mr. Jeremić (Serbia): Let me express my deep respect to you, Mr. President, for the tireless efforts you have made as the leader of the General Assembly. I look forward to working with you, Sir, to ensure a seamless transition between our terms.

It is a great honour to stand before members as President-elect of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. At the outset, allow me to extend my sincere gratitude to the States that supported the candidature of the Republic of Serbia. We are a small developing country that belongs to no military alliance or political union. It is therefore truly an honour, through the confidence entrusted in me by so many nations from all over the world, to have been elected to preside over the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations.

I look forward to working with everyone, beginning with His Excellency Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis of the Republic of Lithuania. I wish to thank him for his gracious conduct throughout the campaign. I hope to be able to draw on his wisdom and experience during my time in office.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to the many diplomats of Serbia for their diligent efforts to advance my candidature. Let me extend my special appreciation to the most senior and experienced among them, our Permanent Representative to the United Nations, His Excellency Ambassador Feodor Starčević.

I consider my election as President of the General Assembly to be primarily a tribute to the Serbian people, whom I have had the honour to serve as Minister for Foreign Affairs for more than five years. Like many other nations, mine has travelled through periods of tragedy and periods of glory. At the close of the twentieth century, one of the proud victors over fascism and a founding member of the United Nations descended into ferocious internal strife. The ensuing devastation and fratricide left deep wounds in their wake. In the past few

years, under the courageous leadership of Boris Tadić, Serbia has reached out to its neighbours, offering a hand of friendship and reconciliation. We have also reached out to other members of the global community, including those with whom we have had bitter disagreements. A painful era has now come to an end. Today, our nation can proudly stand before the world again, less than two decades after having been excluded from the Hall.

We are a country in which the transfer of power is accomplished peacefully and in accordance with the rule of law. Serbia is a democracy that, beyond working to ensure its own sovereignty and territorial integrity and the well-being of its citizens, has no ambition other than to advance the common interest of humankind. We therefore remain steadfastly committed to the maintenance of international peace and security, the first stated purpose of the United Nations. Working to accomplish that task, second to none in importance, is a most solemn undertaking.

The theme I am proposing for the high-level debate at the opening of the sixty-seventh session of the Assembly is "Bringing about the adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations by peaceful means". Given our experience, we believe that we can facilitate the implementation of any resulting proposals, including those related specifically to conflict prevention. In taking up this critical issue in September and beyond, let us not forget that peace is not merely the absence of war. As was once remarked by Spinoza, the first philosopher to argue that democracy is the best form of Government, peace is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence and justice.

I pledge to fulfil my duty as President to the very best of my ability, in order to try to justify the confidence that members have bestowed upon me. I will exercise my authority in a forthright and even-handed manner, with the utmost respect for the equal rights and dignity of each Member State. I hope that our joint endeavours may help to bring us closer to the day when humankind shall have assuaged its hurts and abolished its fears; and in so doing, to further the aspirations of the peoples of the United Nations to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. May it be the will of God that the next session of the General Assembly goes down in history as one of peace.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Benin, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to extend my warm congratulations and those of the Group of African States to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his impressive election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, and to wish him every success in fulfilling his mandate. His personal qualities and vast experience, and the immense support that he commands, are all advantages for the United Nations and a guarantee of his ability to advance the major projects of the sixty-seventh session.

The challenges the world faces are multiple and many-faceted. The General Assembly will have to play a central role in finding solutions. Those challenges affect the continent of Africa in particular. Africa is currently confronting difficulties linked to the lack of sufficient financial resources to ensure its development and to problems of insecurity that are increasing in proportion to the growing power of religious intolerance and various forms of crime and trafficking of all kinds. More than ever, therefore, Africa needs special attention from the United Nations to aid it in its efforts to promote human rights, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, and to combat insecurity — all of which will enable us to help democracy take root and strengthen the rule of law. In that regard, the African Group commends His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser for his bold and successful work in every area during his presidency of the Assembly, particularly that of peace and conflict resolution.

The resurgence of crises in various African States has led to hotbeds of tension that run the risk of nullifying the progress that has been achieved over the past decade. The international community therefore cannot sit by in silence in the face of a situation that, as the crisis in Mali shows, requires major mobilization and determined action in order to assist a return to peace and harmony. The theme of the sixty-sixth session was "The role of mediation in the settlement of disputes by peaceful means", a choice that recognized the importance of dialogue in maintaining international peace and security.

The agenda for the Assembly's sixty-seventh session is just as full as that for the sixty-sixth. The international community is dealing with major challenges that entail significant stakes for States. They have to do in particular with issues such as controlling the terrorist threat emerging in the Sahel-Saharan zone; ensuring food security; protecting the continent against

the harmful effects of the financial and economic crisis; promoting sustainable development; assessing the progress achieved in mobilizing international support for meeting the Millennium Development Goals and implementing the New Partnership for Africa's Development; strengthening the rule of law; and promoting inclusive social and economic development. All those challenges require increased multilateralism.

Africa will spare no effort to help bring together views and actions in order to encourage global governance commensurate with the expectations of the international community. The African Group hopes that Africa will find in the President-elect an ear attuned to African concerns, so that the United Nations can take decisive measures aimed at achieving action and helping humankind find appropriate solutions to the problems it faces.

In conclusion, through me, the African Group would like to convey its heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Jeremić on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. We wish him every success in his lofty role.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Vanuatu, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Kalpokas (Vanuatu): At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, to congratulate you, Sir, on your able guidance as President of the General Assembly. We are glad that, with your able guidance, you have been able to steer us through these times of problems that we all face.

Please allow me to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. His election comes at a time when all Member States are eager to work more closely in order to promote cooperation and peace in the world. His able guidance and leadership in that position will be an advantage to that end. The Asia-Pacific region has confidence in his able leadership to guide us through the meetings and the work of the General Assembly. We pledge our support for his leadership.

Many Member States look forward to reforms in United Nations bodies such as the Security Council, as well as in the relationship between the General Assembly and the Security Council. The time has come for those two organs to begin to engage in dialogue for the consideration of reform.

With Mr. Jeremić's leadership, I am confident that his long-sighted view will guide us through the challenges that the United Nations faces in the world today with all its Member States.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Dapkiunas (Belarus): It is a special honour to address the General Assembly today on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States with words of gratitude for entrusting a representative of a country that belongs to the Eastern European region with the honour of being the Assembly's next President.

On behalf of the Group, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his election to that important position. We trust that his great professional qualities and rich experience will serve the collective good of the General Assembly by helping to re-energize its activity and ensure the Assembly's continued prominence in the work of the United Nations.

Today is also the most opportune occasion to express our Group's appreciation for the tireless efforts, tenacity and able leadership of the current President of the General Assembly. His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser has been most skilfully guiding the Assembly's work and ensuring that the Assembly's voice is well heard, acknowledged and respected.

On behalf of the Group, I wish the President and the President-elect every success in their important work. Please rest assured that the members of the Group of Eastern European States will continue to be reliable and interested partners in the common endeavour to assert, by our practical actions, the lofty ideals of the United Nations.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Honduras, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Ms. Flores (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Member States members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States in order to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić of the Republic of Serbia on his election as President of the General

Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, which will begin next September.

The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States would like to recognize the excellent work of His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, who has led the work of the Assembly in a spirit of service. Member States will remember his vocation to work for the good of humankind and his dedication, sense of responsibility and valuable contribution in the promotion of mediation as an effective tool to achieve peace and security.

The Assembly, guided by a new President, faces great challenges and Member States expect full commitment to and direction in its work, as well as the necessary consideration of, and attention to, the topics on the multilateral agenda.

The upcoming session of the General Assembly will be an important opportunity to discuss the United Nations reform process and global problems that require comprehensive solutions on the basis of the three pillars of the Organization: peace and security, development, and human rights.

The election of Mr. Jeremić to the presidency of the upcoming session of the General Assembly is enhanced by the leadership role he will assume in carrying out his work as he guides us in achieving our goals. His capability and broad political and diplomatic experience as Minister for Foreign Affairs of his country and other important positions more than qualify him to assume his new role. That experience is a guarantee of the seriousness with which he will approach the issues that we face, both individually and collectively.

The Rio+20 Conference in Brazil, and the G-20 Summit represent new initiatives and hopes for humankind. The Assembly must respond to the policies and objectives set out by our heads of State and Government in the Millennium Development Goals and those for the establishment of new goals starting from 2015.

The General Assembly has entrusted Mr. Jeremić with leading our work. In wishing him great success, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States would like to commit to fully cooperating with him and to express our complete confidence in him. He can count on us.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I have the honour to extend our sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić of the Republic of Serbia on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session. As Minister for Foreign Affairs of his country since 2007, having actively participated in numerous high-level United Nations events, including many plenary meetings of the General Assembly, Mr. Jeremić is extensively familiar with international affairs in general, and with the United Nations in particular.

We are at a time where the role of the General Assembly is heightened by an ever-increasing multidimensionalism and multilateralism in international affairs. The common challenges of the global community and the opportunities for enhanced cooperation require visionary, inclusive and transparent leadership. Mr. Jeremić's experience and dynamism will enable him to make a valuable contribution to the future work of the General Assembly. We believe that he will demonstrate the leadership required to overcome the challenges in order to grasp the benefits of the opportunities.

On this occasion, we would also like to congratulate Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania, for his professionalism, integrity and gracious conduct.

I also take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of the State of Qatar, for his able leadership and notable work. You, Sir, have tirelessly promoted important matters for the international community and have achieved significant progress in the work of the Assembly.

In concluding my remarks, I would like to commit, on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, our full support for Mr. Jeremić during his tenure. We wish him success.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 4.

Drawing of lots for the seating protocol for the sixty-seventh regular session

The President: As announced in the *Journal of the United Nations*, we will now proceed to the drawing of lots to determine the Member State that will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the

sixty-seventh session. In accordance with the established practice, the Secretary-General draws the name of one Member State from a box containing the names of the Member States of the General Assembly. The delegation whose name is drawn will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall, and the other countries will follow in English alphabetical order. The same order will be observed in the Main Committees.

I now invite the Secretary-General to proceed with the drawing of lots.

Having been drawn by lot by the Secretary-General, Jamaica was chosen to occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the sixty-seventh session.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for drawing the lots.

Before proceeding to the holding of the consecutive meetings of the Main Committees to elect their respective Bureau members, as announced in the *Journal*, I would like to invite the Chairs of the Main Committees and the Chairs of the regional groups for this month to consultations on the elections of the Chairs and Bureaux of the Main Committees. Thereafter, the Assembly will hold the 114th plenary meeting to elect the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the sixty-seventh session.

Members are also reminded that, after the adjournment of this meeting, there will be an opportunity for Member States to extend their congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President-elect of the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, in the Indonesian Lounge.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.